



State of Illinois Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker

Program Year 2014

Wagner-Peyser Act-Agricultural Outreach Plan

Modification to Five Year Plan

March 13, 2014

Providing Services to Agricultural Employers and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs)

As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107, the *Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)* provides Wagner-Peyser Act-funded program services to migrant seasonal farm workers (MSFW) and agricultural (AG) employers.

Agricultural Employers

A goal for PY 14 is to strengthen employer relationships by increasing employer outreach and targeting top AG employers based on hired employees. Outreach staff will encourage the use of the Agricultural Recruitment System and IllinoisJobLink.com to recruit and post job openings. In addition, employers will be advised on staff assisted services offered to employers such as on-site hiring and recruiting events that include local training providers and workforce partners.

IDES will continue to build relationships with membership organizations such as the Farm Bureau and discuss ways to reach AG employers and inform them of IDES's employer services. Publications, event presentations, workshops and other communication means will be utilized when possible. IDES anticipates that increased knowledge of IDES' services and programs will improve the number of job orders, referrals and job placements.

Farm Labor Contractors (FLC) who recruit and employ farm workers are an employer type that will be targeted for employer services and compliance with state and federal regulations. There are 35 FLC's in Illinois known to have recruited and employed farm labor. Approximately 2,000 migrants have thus far been employed by FLC'S in 2013.

IDES anticipates that the number of migrants hired by FLC's will remain consistent with prior years in areas where staff provided outreach. PY 2014 outreach plans include strategies to reach MSFWs in the northern and upper northwest regions. PY 14 Outreach staff will be assigned to conduct

outreach in remote areas and we anticipate an increase of employer and job seeker registrations and possibly identifying new FLC's. IDES will coordinate efforts with the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC) in these regions.

Outreach staff will continue to monitor FLC's licensing and strengthen coordination with the Illinois Department of Labor for their expertise and support on FLC registration with the state. With this, it is anticipated that agricultural employer registrations will increase by 20 during PY 14. In addition, the added support of IDES' Business Services Team will help with PY 14 employer goals. The Business Services Team works directly with employers and employer organizations such as local chambers of commerce to inform employers of IDES employer services. Additionally, the Business Service Team can assist with registering agricultural employers and entering their job orders.

Foreign Labor Certification (H2A) type employers are increasing slightly and we anticipate this will continue in PY 14.

Referral and placement of domestic job seekers remains a challenge. Recruiting events will continue in PY 2014 at locations convenient to the employers and applicants. Domestic applicants report that travel and overnight stay is a barrier to accepting job offers. Additionally, the short-term nature of the work (many jobs are 3 months or shorter) is another disincentive to domestic workers. . Other limitations to placing domestic workers are work experience requirements and six day mandatory work schedules.

MSFW Outreach Based on Previous Year Activity

As required by 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.101, IDES will ensure that MSFWs are offered the same range of employment services, benefits and protections as those provided to non-MSFWs.

Staff assisted services for job referral include:

1. Assist job seekers in completing quality and full registrations in IllinoisJobLink.com
2. Provide Career Guidance
3. Improve job matches by identifying job preferences and complete work history.
4. Educating the MSFW about training opportunities.

IDES continues to meet 3 of 5 Equity Indicators of Compliance, as well as 4 of 7 Minimum Service Level Indicators. (Migrant Indicator Compliance Report Part 3 and 4.) During PY 14, IDES will focus on improving the compliance areas that are not being met by training new staff and setting regional goals to achieve compliance. Areas to improve include referral to employment, job development and placement.

While IDES continues to meet Equity measures, we remain committed to improving job placements and placements in long term non-AG jobs. During PY 14 we look forward to continue strengthening the working relationship with Illinois' WIA 167 Grantee, the Illinois Migrant Council (IMC). IDES' Statewide Monitor Advocate will coordinate efforts with the IMC Director of Workforce Investment Programs regarding the MSFW program and the WIA 167 program which is also identified as the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP).

In response to previous year staffing challenges, 3 to 6 MSFW outreach staff will be hired and assigned to critical regions of the state to provide MSFW services full-time. This will lead to a positive impact on job development, placement and career guidance activity. IDES will hold a one day

pre-season meeting with IMC to prepare for coordination of joint activities, discuss concerns of frontline staff, and identify mutual staff needs for program training by IDES and IMC, decide on implementation strategies for referrals and outline areas of communication with IDES Business Services Team.

Distribution of bi-lingual flyers and brochures will continue and when necessary they will be mailed to clients. Service providers participate in distributing IDES materials but the highest distribution is at MSFW events. In PY 13 IDES staff participated thus far in 68 MSFW events, we anticipate increasing this number in PY 14.

We anticipate the number of contacts will remain steady or increase slightly during PY 14. In the first two quarters of PY 13 staff reported 3136 contacts while the entirety of PY 2012 concluded with 3683 contacts. This increase was the result of outreach staff dedicated solely to the MSFW program for the entirety of the season, increased use of technology, specifically IllinoisJobLink.com, and stronger coordination between IDES, IMC and other partner agencies. These successful activities will be built upon in PY 14 as outlined below.

As reported by US DOL/ETA TEGL 13-13, Illinois is 15th on number of MSFW registrations and is required to meet significant local office requirements. At this time, Champaign and Peoria local offices have been designated by the USDOL as Illinois' MSFW significant offices. This is a decrease in the number of significant offices as designated by US DOL. A comprehensive level of MSFW services will be provided at these offices, including but not limited to, access to information about workplace safety and rights, career guidance and referrals to training opportunities.

In addition to the physical locations prescribed by the USDOL, a majority of the contacts and services will be provided in the field. In order to enable a much higher impact in PY 14, IDES will be recruiting 3 to 6 outreach workers assigned to work full-time on the MSFW program throughout the season. The new staff will be provided comprehensive Wagner-Peyser and MSFW training and will have authority and flexibility to travel the state in support of the MSFW program. MSFW outreach staff will be provided with technology tools such as laptops with air-cards and dedicated access to vehicles. While physical locations have decreased, IDES' commitment to the MSFW program has never been stronger and savings realized from fewer brick and mortar locations are being invested back into the program in the form of dedicated staff, technology and training.

Assessment of Need

Assessment is based on prior years' activity and accomplishments. PY 12 (June 2012-June 2013) numbers are reported below. Already our PY 13 numbers have far surpassed PY 12 due to training, dedicated staff and use of technology during last year's growing and harvest season. Our goal is to continue this increase in PY 14.

In PY 2012 (June 2012 to June 2013) total MSFW applications were 973. Of these, 35 (3.60%) were referred to employment; 904 (92.91%) received staff assisted services; 789 (81.09%) were referred to supportive services and 640 (65.78%) received career guidance. These results exceed the equity measures compared to non-MSFW clients.

In the first half of PY 13 IDES has already exceeded the PY 12 outcomes and in PY 14 IDES will improve in the referrals to employment, job development and job placement categories.

Major Crop Activity

Seed and Grain companies; hog farms; Pumpkin and horseradish farms are the primary industries for employment needs. Other industries with smaller workforce remain in fruit and vegetable farms. While Illinois is considered a seasonal state, crop activity begins in April and ends in early December.

The University of Illinois Extension Service; *Summary of Illinois Specialty Growers Association* reports the following schedule of crops and seasons for Illinois:

- Asparagus (April to June)
- Strawberries (Late May to Early June)
- Apricots and Cherries (June to July)
- Blueberries (June to August)
- Beans, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cauliflower and Peas (June to October)
- Fresh Herbs (June to October)
- Raspberries (June to November)
- Summer Apples, Blackberries, Peaches, Nectarines (July to August)
- Beets, Corn, Cucumbers, Pickles & Plums (July to September)
- Peppers and Tomatoes (July to October)
- Thorn less Blackberries (August)
- Grapes, Muskmelons and Watermelons (August and September)
- Eggplants and Greens (August and November)
- Turnips (September to November)
- Fall Winter Apples (September to November)
- Pumpkins, Squash and Gourds (November to December)

Workforce Oriented Publications

- MSFW (bi-lingual) Program Brochure: identifies ES services and staff information.
- Employment Service Complaint System: Identifies contact information and is posted at all IDES offices. Flyer type format is distributed with brochure.
- Illinois Migrant Council: WIA training information, training eligibility and locations.
- IllinoisJobLink.com: Brochure and Spanish registration form.

Registrations/Job Placement and Monitoring via IllinoisJobLink.com

An increase in self-service registrations is highly feasible through the use of IllinoisJobLink.com. IllinoisJobLink.com employs a translator for multiple languages including Spanish. While Spanish Self-Service User Guides are available the most common method of completing registrations and enrollments is through staff assisted services. We seek to dramatically increase registrations in the field using our laptops and air-cards to cut down on paperwork and data entry.

A completed IllinoisJobLink.com account offers clients a personalized home page where MSFWs are able to manage a job search, create or upload a résumé, and maintain his/her job seeker profile. Key words are used to search jobs and the job orders allow for self referrals. Outreach staff assists in job referrals, follow-up and job readiness.

Monitoring staff activity is also an easier task through IllinoisJobLink.com as we are able to review MIC, 9002A, and many other data reports to review daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual data related to services provided to MSFWs. Data is available by user, local office, regional and statewide. This allows for quality data reports, setting benchmarks and improves outreach and ES services to MSFW's.

IDES will engage in training IMC in updated features to IllinoisJobLink.com affecting farm workers and any other changes for PY2014. IDES administrators regularly seek suggestions on how this system can be improved and meet the MSFW client and staff needs, increasing quality and levels of MSFW services.

As planned for PY 13, IDES will continue promoting IllinoisJobLink.com to community organizations and partner agencies who have a vested interest in serving MSFW's and their families. Community resource centers such as Illinois Migrant Council in Cobden, Illinois continue to be the model on how partner staff assisted services can be successful.

Assessment of MSFW Needs

Through Case Management and community collaboration, outreach staff is able to identify barriers to employment; workplace safety and other challenges such as housing standards and overall social welfare needs of MSFWs. Critical needs are primarily labor rights violations, health and safety in the field and legal aid services. Staff referral to supportive services for PY 13 indicate staff is making referrals at a rate of 81% (1QPY 13) of those registered in IllinoisJobLink.com and we anticipate an increase in PY 14.

It is an important Outreach team responsibility to gain knowledge of community services within their respective regions, statewide and interstate services. IDES continues to work with community based organizations to simplify the referral process and achieve the goal of getting timely service to MSFW clients. During PY 2014, staff will be provided with lab tops in order to provide "on location" services; promote the IllinoisJobLink.com and the benefits of completing MSFW registrations. In addition, we look to IllinoisJobLink.com data collection to assist in assessment of MSFW needs.

Referrals to Supportive Services

Outreach staff will make referrals to service providers year round; this is not a seasonal activity. Illinois Migrant Council WIA-167-Grantee is a primary referral source of MSFW training programs. IDES staff is in collaboration in promoting IMC's Health and Safety initiative. "Heat Stress Prevention" presentations are assisted by IDES outreach staff, there is 24 Heat and Stress events projected for PY 13. In addition, PY 12 activity reports 26 migrant arrivals events with approximately 1,000 referrals to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). An increase is projected for PY 13 and PY 14. Staff is trained on Federal and State services including Wage and Hour, OSHA, Department of Justice, Department of Human Rights, and other compliance agencies where referrals can be made to address challenges facing the MSFW community.

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to MSFWs

- Employment information on IllinoisJobLink.com
- Referral to Job Openings
- Job Seeker Skills and Resume Preparation
- Job Development
- Assessment Interview
- Referrals to Supportive Services and Staff Assisted Services
- Information on Employment and Training Opportunities
- Labor Market Information
- Tax Credit Programs
- Bi-lingual Spanish Speaking staff and Limited English Proficiency Service
- Information on the Employment Service Complaint System
- Trained Complaint Specialists
- Re Employment Service Program (RESP, ex-offenders services)
- Career Guidance

Wagner-Peyser Act Services Provided to Agricultural Employers

- Agricultural Recruitment System (Local, Intrastate, Interstate)
- Housing Inspections
- Information and assistance on the Foreign Labor Certification process
- Farm Labor Contractor applications and information
- IllinoisJobLink.com self serve or staff assisted job orders and recruitment
- Information and Referral to agencies offering programs or services benefiting the business community
- Tax Credit Program information and certification of applicants
- Informational Meetings Unemployment Insurance, Wage/Hour, Migrant Law, Worker's Compensation, OSHA and Migrant Camp licensing, etc.
- Prevailing wage Ad-Hoc and Prevailing Practice Surveys are conducted annually
- Labor Market Information

- Job Fairs
- Local offices offer Conference room for recruitment purposes
- Field Checks and Visits
- Participate at New Employee Orientation meetings

Monitor Advocate Services

A full-time State Monitor Advocate (SMA) is currently on staff and performs the duties as assigned. The SMA is scheduled to continue duties for PY 13 with administrative support by Central office staff. The Monitor Advocate provides training for collaborating agency staff on the Monitor Advocate System, Outreach, provision of services to MSFWs and the Employment Service Complaint System, Migrant Labor camp Inspections and other topics as requested.

- Conducts statewide reviews of the delivery of services and protections afforded to MSFWs.
- Completes annual office reviews at all significant local offices
- Consults with various divisions of the agency to ensure accurate reporting of MSFW data.
- Prepare and implement operating instructions including Policy and Procedures relating to MSFWs
- Prepare for and participate in Federal reviews
- Prepare an annual Outreach plan as required
- Identify statewide opportunities for recruitment of MSFW
- Monitor and report on the Employment Complaint System, process MSFW complaints as needed
- Participate at membership organizations, which serve the AG community. (i.e. Farm Bureau, 167)
- Maintain communication with Outreach staff and management and address issues as they arise
- Serve as Advocate to improve services for MSFWs within the employment service system
- Manage the timeliness of field checks, housing inspections, employer visits and complaint processes
- Meet with farm worker groups and employers to promote the use of Employment Service.
- Conducts field visits to working and living locations of MSFWs.
- Collaborates with WIA 167 staff and participates in sponsored events.

Statement of Approval of the State Monitor Advocate

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107 and as prescribed by Region V , the Monitor Advocate participated in the preparation of this agricultural plan and has been afforded the opportunity to approve and comment on the plan. Such review indicates that the plan has been prepared properly, omitting none of the prescribed requirements and properly describing the activities planned for providing services to both agricultural employers and migrant and (MSFWs).

Collaboration with Partners

Illinois Migrant Council (IMC): IDES and IMC held a telephone conference on Monday, March 10th to discuss the upcoming growing season to inform the AOP and address any concerns held by either organization. Topics covered included the need to MSFW program in geographical regions in Illinois during the upcoming season and for participation by staff of IDES and IMC during essential meetings and communication sessions.

Illinois Association of Agencies and Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy (IAACOMA): IDES participation at the IAACOMA conference continues as in previous years. IDES seeks to sponsor community members, employers, service providers and farm workers attendance at this conference. These individuals will be those who normally would not attend or know of the IAACOMA goals to create change by educating community members on MSFW issues. Agenda's typically include Migrant Housing; Health Issues; Education needs; Safety in the Fields/Chemical exposure; and policy reform. Participating organizations include: IL Dept. of Public Health, OSHA Wage and Hour, Community Health Partners, Legal Assistance Foundation, Housing Action of Illinois, schools and employer staff are present. IDES staff participates in workshops, panel discussions and Monitor Advocate is an active IAACOMA board member.

Illinois Migrant Legal Aide: IDES has contacted this group to further collaborate on issues of human trafficking and sexual harassment amongst MSFWs.

Distribution of AOP

In accordance with 20 CFR Subpart B, 653.107(d) (1), (2), and (3), the AOP will be available for these entities to review and submit comments up to thirty days; and consideration will be made to include comments and revisions accordingly.

The AOP-PY2014 will be posted on our website: www.ides.illinois.gov and www.illinoisworknet.com

Illinois Migrant Council WIA-167 "National Farm Worker Jobs Program (NFJP) Grantee; appropriate MSFW groups; public agencies; agricultural employer organizations; and other interested parties will be notified of its website(s) posting.

IDES AOP modifications to the approved 5 Year Plan was submitted electronically to the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB) for their involvement. USDOL/ETA Regional Monitor Advocate, Eric Hernandez will receive copy by May 15th for approval with a copy to the National Monitor Advocate, as required.

Questions Regarding IDES AOP

Contact: John Waters, MSFW Program Manager at John.M.Waters@illinois.gov

or

Telephone 312-793-2913.